

INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN IN STREET VENDING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES IN GUWAHATI CITY – AN ANALYTICAL SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

Women Street vendors' are playing an important role though informally in selling a wide variety of essential products. At a minimum investment and capital, they are able to earn money in the form of street vending activity. The women vendors have been successful in becoming an earned member of the society thereby able to assist in the economic side of their family and society at large. The present study highlights the nature of work carried out by the women vendors in different localities of Guwahati city mainly on four aspects, socio-economic status; management of the business; difficulties faced by and the attitude towards the profession. A descriptive survey method is followed and the sample consisted of 440 women vendors selected purposively. The tool used for the collection of information is a Questionnaire schedule. The study revealed that the socio-economic condition of the majority of the women vendors is poor. Vending work opted is mainly due to economic necessity. A variety of difficulties are faced by the women vendors' with respect to purchasing of materials; selling concerning price determination; bargaining; storage; quality; seating place; transportation; communication and seasonal imbalance; equal opportunity or health and safety issues at work. Women vendors' like the profession and they are financially supportive to raise the family status due to circumstances.

KEYWORDS: *Women Street vendor, Socio-Economic Condition, Business Related Matters; Difficulties Faced & Vending*

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INTRODUCTION

Cross-section of the women in the society is in deplorable condition as such they opt for street vending under certain compulsion. In urban areas, street vendors are an integral part of our history and culture. Traditionally in India shopping has primarily been an informal one. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey, in 2017-18 there were around 11.9 million street vendors in the country, of whom around 1.2 million were women. The poor women migrate to the city in search of employment, they take to vending as an easier option in the form of self-employment. The women who were without any expertise or knowledge and had no other options, then they were adopting the works like housemaids and vegetable selling and selling fruits or nuts as vendors on street (Anjaria, 2006). Street vendors occupy a significant proportion of the total employment in the informal sector (Saha, 2011).

Street Vendors – Categories

National Policy on Urban Street Vendors (2006) defines “A street vendor is a person who offers goods or services for sale to the public without having a permanently built structure but with a temporary static structure or mobile stall (or head-load).”

Protection of Street Vendors and Regulation of the Street Vending Bill states that a street vendor is a person engaged in vending of articles, goods, wares, food items or merchandise of everyday use or offering services

to the general public on a street, lane, sidewalk, footpath, pavement, public park or any other public place or private area or from a temporary built up structure or by moving from place to place, and includes hawkers, peddlers, squatters and all other synonymous terms which may be local or region specific (in para 2 (1)(m)).

A street vendor is broadly defined as “a person who offers goods or services for sale, without having a permanent built-up structure but with a temporary static structure by occupying space on the streets or other public/private areas or maybe mobile by moving from one place to other carrying their merchandises on pushcarts or in cycles or baskets on their head” (<http://nationalhawkerfederation.com/>)

Types of Vendors:

- weekly market vendors
- mobile market vendors (more men are employed in this)
- static or stationary vendors: This could be location-wise or item-wise like fruits/vegetables and other items like toys, etc. (women are mainly found in this category)

In India there exist four basic categories of street vendors: stationary, peripatetic mobile and street.

- Stationary vendors are those who carry out vending on a regular basis at a specific location with the implicit or explicit consent of authorities.
- Peripatetic vendors are those who carry out vending on foot,
- Mobile Street vendors are those who move from place to place vending their goods or services on bicycles or motorized vehicles.
- Street vendors are identified as self-employed workers in the informal sector who offer their labour to sell goods and services on the street without having any permanent built up structure.(National Policy on Urban Street Vendors (NPUSV, 2006).

Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution of India promises the right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business to all Indian citizens. Paradoxically, on the other hand, different sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Police Act empower police to remove any obstructions on the streets. In 2014, the Parliament of India passed legislation called "Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act 2014".

Significance of the Study

At a minimum investment and capital, individuals are able to earn money in the form of street vending activity. As the concentration of population in urban areas is high street vendors are visible with a variety of products for sale. In urban areas, there are different pockets offering ample scope to the street vendors for marketing opportunities.

Certain sections of the women in the society are in deplorable condition as such they opt for street vending under certain compulsion. Women Street vendors' are playing an important role though informally in selling a wide variety of essential products. With this view, a study is undertaken to assess the socio economic status of women street vendors and this will surely offer an insight to the urban policy planners and administrators for extending the women street vendors the economic rights. The study highlights the way women earn their livelihood and try to be an independent member of

society. It also puts forward the hurdles which they face owing to a patriarchal society. The study has been done on different aspects of the women vendors in the greater Guwahati area and as such their extent of hardships is noticeable as well as their contribution toward society. The women belong to different religions, castes and creed but their only motto is to earn for the livelihood of their family. Some even happen to be the sole earner of their family.

This happens to be a maiden venture by the investigators to study deep into the life and the work culture of the women street vendors of the greater Guwahati area. The women vendors have been successful in becoming an earned member of the society thereby able to assist in the economic side of their family and society at large. Street vending offers an important source of earnings for the unemployed in urban areas, in addition to a source of relatively inexpensive goods and services for city residents. The present study conducted in Guwahati city throws light on the socio-economic status; management of business and difficulties faced by the women vendors in detail.

Objectives

The study aims to fulfill the following objectives -

- To identify the existing socio-economic status of women vendors.
- To explore the manner in which materials are procured for the day to day business
- To assess the difficulties faced by women vendors.
- To find out the attitudes of the women towards this profession

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The role of women as business owners is gradually increasing, and in India empowering women through entrepreneurship has become an integral part of our development efforts. Most of the vendors have strongly agreed that their current business gives them a regular source of income with very less amount of investment to start vending and all of them have entered this vocation as an entrepreneur and not as an ancestral, they have also added that it is easy to handle (Malasan, 2019).

Bhowmik (2001) conducted a survey on seven cities in India. The study demonstrated that except in Kolkata, all other municipalities have provisions for providing licenses for street vending. He pointed out that, women street vendors in India prefer to be fully dynamic, never stop or rest too long at any one place, to avoid thugs and/or harassment.

Nidan (2010) survey on 600 street vendors selected from Patna. It found that most of the respondents chose vending as a profession because there were no other jobs available, entry was easier and investment was low.

Sharma, Aparajita and Konwar, Dipjyoti (2014) in their paper *Struggles for Spaces: Everyday Life of a Woman Street Vendor in Delhi* dealt with the variety of forms of struggle for space in a city which a woman vendor experiences in her everyday life in Delhi. Despite the challenges, she continues to struggle with hope in 'limited situations' and is still very positive towards life.

Rani (2016) *Women in unorganised sector – women vegetable vendors in Tiruchirappalli – a Socio Economic study* states that the Indian economy is characterized by the unorganised sector. With a sample of 50 respondents belonged to the category of vegetable street vendors who are moving by walking with head load. The information was collected through a structured interview schedule. The findings of the study are that the vegetable street vendors in Tiruchirappalli

city face social, economic and health problems. They are totally ignored by society and the government, their work is not recognised. But their contribution to the workforce to the country is a lot.

Chakrabarty, Parikshit and Samarpita, Koley (2018) Socio-Economic Condition among The Women Street Vendors: Anthropological Study on a Street at Jamshedpur in their study focuses to explore the socioeconomic milieu of women street vendors of a daily market near Tatanagar Rail Station, Jamshedpur. This study covered 64 women street vendors. This study pointed that the economic condition of the women street vendors is very poor. The study exposed that the income of women vendors is lower because most of the women vendors are illiterate and the majority of the respondents belonging to poor schedule tribal families. Street vending is not an easy task for women to surviving their livelihood.

Doibale, Mohan K. ; Mohite, Seema D. ; Sawase, Gautam B. and Pagadal, Pallavi H. (2019)

Study of socio-demographic profile and causes of street vending in urban areas in Aurangabad, Maharashtra studied socio-demographic profile, causes, addiction, morbidity pattern among street vendors. The objective of the present study is to study socio-demographic profile of street vendors, causes of street vending, addiction among street vendors, health problems faced by street vendors. Unable to fulfill the requirement of formal sector and no other source of income are the major causes to be in the street vending.

Goswami and Begum (2016) in their paper presented a comparative picture of two important segments of the urban informal sector, namely street vendors and home-based enterprises. The study highlights demographic profile, nature of occupation and business delivery practices undertaken in Nagaon and Cachar districts of Assam, India. The findings do not show any marked differences between the two segments in the two districts.

Several studies are conducted on street vendors on various aspects like socio-economic condition, food, poverty in abroad and India. Studies conducted in the North Eastern Region of India are limited and with the passage of time there are changes in terms of working style and processes. In Guwahati city most of the studies focused on street food vending as such there is a dearth of information particularly with regard to women street vendors.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey method has been adopted in this research.

Population - All the women vendors of Metropolitan city, Guwahati are taken into consideration.

Sample - 440 women vendors are selected purposively by the researcher for the study from different parts of Guwahati city.

Delimitation of the study-The study is delimited among the women vendors in Guwahati city only.

Tools used: For the collection of primary data, a well-structured questionnaire was prepared consisting of sections like socio-economic status, procedure for business transaction, difficulties faced and attitudes towards these professions.

Data collection procedure: The information related to the present study was collected through a structured questionnaire schedule.

Analysis and Interpretation

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures are followed by the researcher. Data collected through

questionnaire was subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis

General Information

General information about women vendors is put forward.

Locality wise Distribution

Women vendor respondents belonged to different parts of Guwahati city namely; Adabari (4.5%), Beltola (6.8%), Boragaon-Gorchuk (4.5%), Chandmari (6.8%), Garchuk (6.8%), Jalukbari (6.8%), Kamakhya-Boothnath (6.8%), Lankeswar (6.8%), Maligaon (9.1%), Manipuri Basti (6.8%), Noonmati (6.8%), Panbazaar (6.8%), Pandu (6.8%), Sarabati (6.8%) and Uzanbazar(6.8%).

Caste

Among the respondents, 49.5% belong to Scheduled Caste; 38.3% from General category; and 12.2% happens to be Scheduled Tribe.

Age Level

Age of the women vendor respondents varies from 21-43 years of age group. The majority of the women vendor respondents belonged to the age group of 24-26 years.

Religion

88.5% of the women vendor respondents belonged to Hindu; 10.2% from Muslim; and 1.2% of Christian religion.

Mother Tongue of Respondents

The Mother tongue of the majority (44.9%) of the women vendor respondents happens to be Assamese; followed by 17.1% Bengali; 17.3% Hindi; and other languages include Bodo, Garo, Kachari, Karbi, Manipuri, Nepali and Rabha.

Qualification of Respondents

The lowest and highest qualifications of respondents were found to be Class 3 and Higher Secondary passed respectively. 3.6% are Higher Secondary passed; 7.3% are Matriculate; 2.7% are class 9 passed; 50.1% are of Upper Primary level and 53.7% are of Lower Primary level.

Objective 1: Socio-Economic Status of Women Vendors

- **Existing type of Family of the respondents**

There is a clear indication that the majority (70.5%) of the respondents are in favour of nuclear type of family.

- **Infrastructural facility**

Living standard of a family starts with the infrastructural status of the house where the respondents residing. Majority 51.5% of the respondents live in thatched type of house. Only 26.6% and 6% of the respondents live in tinned and concrete type of house.

71.5% of the respondents have electricity facilities in their home and the remaining do not possess this facility.

31% of the respondents make use of LPG fuel for cooking purpose; 20% uses kerosene stove; 6% use bio-gas; and

nearly 43% use firewood.

Regarding source of supply water, 46% of the respondents have tube well facility; nearly 17% have tap water and for 9% of them have other type of source.

Responses reveal that nearly 50% of the respondents have pucca sanitation facility and the remaining half has kutccha one.

- **Support extended in family**

There is a variation in support extended by family members to the women respondents. 24% extends the fullest support; 15% extend support to a great extent; 44% to some extent; and 16% to a very little extent. The figures suggest 84% of the family members offer support to the women vendors.

It is observed, 44% of the women vendors are the only earner for their families. More than 34% of the women vendors stated both husband and wife work together and earn for the family. In 8% of the houses, there are some members who are engaged in different occupations and earn for the family.

During work time, a variety of responses made available with regard to the person responsible for looking after respective houses revealing in 28.5% houses, Mother is entrusted the duty; in 20.5% houses, husband; in 25.6% houses, neighbour; in 3.9% houses, servant; and in 21.5% others (include son/daughter/sister/cousin).

- **Contributor as a decision maker in the house**

82 % of the respondents opined to contribute as a decision maker in the family but the rest 18% does not contribute.

All the respondents expressed to be a member of one or the other organization. Further, it is found the women vendors contributes either in the form of, attending meetings by 52%; offers opinion on essential matters by 27%; or by offering money 20.9%.

Objective 2: Business Related Matters

- **Duration in business**

More than fifty percent of the respondents were found engaged in vending activity for more than 3 years. 29% are engaged for less than 2 years and 18% engaged for more than 5 years duration. So, it is clear 70% of the women vendors are engaged in vending activity for a span of 3-9 years.

- **Investment incurred at the start of business**

Initially, 53% of the women vendors accumulated the fund required on their own as capital. Little more than 21% of them borrowed from family members and 10% of them took loans from different institutions.

Amount invested for starting the business by nearly 73% of the women vendors happens to be below Rs. 5000; 20% of them invested Rs. 5000- Rs. 10000 and 7% of them invested more than Rs. 10000.

So, it is evident that more than fifty percent of the women vendors invested self accumulated capital and 73% of them initially invested below Rs. 5000 in business.

- **Procurement of Materials for business**

There are several agencies through which the women vendors usually procure materials either from growers (31%); wholesalers (39%); or from agents (15%). Only 14% of them sell Self- cultivated goods.

There are three popular modes for the determination of price of the purchased material such as price pre-determined by the suppliers in 37% of the cases; according to the market condition (37%); and bargaining at the time of single purchase (20%).

Thus, it is clear, majority (86%) of the women vendors procure materials from different types of suppliers and there are three popular modes for determination of price of the purchased material like price pre-determined by the suppliers; according to the market condition; and bargaining at the time of single purchase.

- **Products on sale**

A variety of items (Vegetables, Green leafy vegetable, Fruits, Fish, Egg, Beetle leaf and beetle nut, Tea and snacks, broom, plastic items, etc.) are sold by the women vendors with varying percentage.

- **Investment of time**

55% of the women vendors start vending right from the morning; 14% during afternoon time and say 31% in the evening hours.

Majority (say 45%) of them spent 8 hours time in vending; 33% for 5 hours and 22% for 10 hours duration.

There is a variation of time for gathering of customers it extends from 9 am till 10 pm.

Also, there is a variation of time for close of vending it extends from 3 pm to beyond 10 pm depending on the type of items on sale.

- **Regarding customers**

There is a variation of time for visits of number of customers varying from one to more than ten (1-2 customers as per 40% of the women vendors; 4-7 according to 32%; 8-10 as per 27% and more than 10 for the remaining percentage).

Certain factors are taken into account as expressed by women vendors while bargaining the price of materials on sale like Cost of materials (24%); Quality (37%); Concessions (36%); Transportation (3%) and Credit for remaining percentage.

Women vendors stated maximum seasonal imbalance is faced in selling during summer 43%; Rainy 31%; Spring 11% and in Winter 15%.

- **Earning process**

Average earning per month of the women vendors varies from below Rs. 1000 (33%); Rs. 1000- Rs. 2000 (26%) to Rs. 2000 and above Rs. 2000 for 41%.

According to 32% of the women vendors expressed that profit is derived after selling; 34% stated to be sometimes and for 34% no profit is derived.

The amount earned by the women vendors is found to be sufficient to manage household expenses for 23%; sometimes sufficient for 41%; and not sufficient for 36%.

Extent of satisfaction derived in this business expressed by the women vendors was found to be very great extent for 14%; great extent for 27%; certain extent for 43%; and to a very little extent for 16%.

Nature of satisfaction derived from this business by the women vendors are

- Able to run the house smoothly by 36% of them
- Able to save money for extra expenses by 26% of them
- Unable to run the house by 38% of them

According to 51% of the women vendors possess deposit accounts but the rest 49% do not possess any account. Among the depositors 20% of them deposit in daily account; 24% in Bandhan bank; 28% deposit in bank; 22% deposit in Cooperative Bank; and 6% of them deposit in Post Office.

- **Managing the business**

Reason for opting the vending work is out of economic necessity for 43%; self-sufficiency for 39%; and due to other reasons in case of 18%.

Responses from the women vendors' shows 63% of them feel comfort in this business sometimes; 20% remain very busy; and 16% are able to manage the time comfortably.

The women vendors' found to bring goods to the market place by own self (22.5%); hires rickshaw (47.5%); hires van ((16.6%); and hires mini auto (13.4%)

According to 91% of the women vendors' stated all goods are not sold on the same day whereas 9% of them responded positively.

If the goods are not sold on the same day, 41% takes home & sell the next day; 54% sell at a low price on the same day; and the remaining 5% sell among fellow vendors.

Objective 3: Difficulties faced by women vendors

Difficulties faced by women vendors to function the business

a) Loading – Unloading

48.6% of the women vendors' found to face difficulty while transporting and unloading the products and getting proper vehicle every time; 17% of them face sometimes; and 34.3% do not face any difficulty.

29% of the women vendors' feel the need of a helper to unload the materials and managing the shop; 40.2% sometimes do feel the need; and 30.7% do not feel the need.

b) Need to Pay Any One

As per 49.8% of the respondent women vendors' stated they need to pay any extra charge for running the business but the remaining percentage responded negatively. 43.2% of the respondents need to pay to Bazaar Committee and 24.8% to Police.

c) Purchase and Selling Process

Certain difficulties need to be faced by the respondent women vendors' while purchasing the materials in the order of Price

determination (34.8%); Regular supply (30.2%); Transportation (34.5%); and Credit facility (0.5%).

With regard to the difficulties faced by the respondent women vendors' while selling include Price determination (23.9%); Bargaining (42.7%); storage (10.5%); and quality (7%); Seating place (9.3%); and Communication(6.6%).

d) Convincing Customers

It is observed the respondent women vendors' face difficulty in convincing old customers (27.5%); middle aged customers (28.6%); and young customers (43.9%).

Difficulties faced by the respondent women vendors' in convincing customer to buy more products concerning reducing of price (25.5%); display of items nicely (24.5%); and communicating in a polite way (50%).

Also, the respondent women vendors' stated, the customers complain regarding the products always (2.5%); sometimes (31.4%); and never (66.1%).

e).Gender Bias & Safety at Work

Certain difficulties need to be faced by the respondent women vendors' in terms of gender biased treatment in workplace always (1.1%); sometimes (41.4%); and never (57.5%).

Difficulties faced by the respondent women vendors' with regard to the male buyer or male vendor try to harass always (3.4%); sometimes (29.5%); and never (67%).

Regarding harassment, the respondent women vendors' found to lodge complaint of harassment to the Bazaar Committee (1.1%); solving by self (90%); and Police Station (8.9%).

In terms of problems concerning gender issues, the respondent women vendors' expressed in relation to equal opportunity (13%); health and safety at work sometimes (38.4%); both equal opportunity and health & safety at work (32.7%).

f) Health Problem

34.3% of the women vendors' found to face physical problem or weakness in carrying out due to family pressure; 19.3% during inflation; 17.7% because of societal outlook; and 28.6% at the time of sick.

38.4% of the women vendors' come to work though fallen sick; 30.9% sometimes do not come; and 30.7% do not come at all.

g) Professional Environment

A variety of environmental problems are faced by the respondent women vendors' such as dust (28.6%); Food (25.2%); construction of roads (30.5%); during events like accidents and brawl (15%); and at the time of visits by higher officials need to vacate the place (0.7%).

44.5% of the respondents feel the threat from female vendors as a competitor for this business and 55.5% from male vendors.

Problems encountered by the women vendors' in this profession with regard to religion (24.1%); caste (23.4%); family background (15.7%); complexion (13%). The remaining 23.8% of them has no such issues.

Respondent women vendors' found to face problem in this profession in terms of age (14.5%); marital status (31.5%); educational level (40%); migration (17%).

h) Facilities Available in Localities

It is observed that the facility available according to the respondent women vendors' is the same as it was 5 years ago (24.5%); and lot of changes occurred recently (75.5%).

According to the respondent women vendors' locality people have fun socializing together on all occasions (29.1%); on some occasions (55.9%); and the remaining (15%) denied.

Also, the respondent women vendors' stated, local authority are interested in the welfare of businessman very much (12%); somewhat (46.1%); and not at all (41.8%).

Nature of Challenges Encountered

A variety of challenges have to be encountered by women vendors 'after starting this vending profession in the areas like personal and environmental mainly in connection with financial status.

Objective 4: Attitudes of the Women towards this Professions

Attitude towards the Profession

Percentage of responses obtained from the women vendors' indicate they like the profession and they are able to become financially supportive to raise the family status. To a certain extent there are likes and dislikes towards this profession among the family members yet, they extend their support for carrying out the activity to the vendors.

There exists a favourable attitude of women vendors' towards this profession. 't'- test is carried out in order to test the significance of their attitude.

Table 1 Test of Significance (One Sample Test)

Attitude of	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t- test	Significance
Women Vendors'	440	14.92	1.823	439	4.891*	Significant
*Significant at 0.01 level						

As the calculated value of 4.891 is greater than the tabulated value of 2.58 at 0.01 level, the hypothesis is accepted. Thus it is inferred that attitude of the women towards street vending profession is favorable.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Objective: 1

- More than 70% of the respondents are in favour of nuclear type of family.
- Around 52% of the women live in thatched type of house; nearly 27% in tinned and 6% in concrete type of house. 71.5% of the respondents have electricity facilities in their home. 31% of the respondents make use of LPG fuel for cooking purpose; and nearly 43% use firewood. 46% of the respondents have tube well facility. Half of the women have pucca sanitation facility.
- 84% of the family members offer support to the women vendors. During working hours, there is one or other person responsible to look after the houses.

- 4. 82 % of the respondents opined to contribute as a decision maker in the family. **Objective 2**
- 70% of the women vendors are engaged in vending activity for a span of 3-9 years.
- Initially, 53% of the women vendors accumulated the fund required on their own as capital. Amount invested for starting the business by nearly 73% of the women vendors happens to be below Rs. 5000.
- 86% of the women vendors procure materials from suppliers and there are three popular modes for determination of price of the purchased material like price pre-determined by the suppliers; according to the market condition; and bargaining at the time of single purchase.
- Varieties of items are sold by the women vendors.
- 55% of the women vendors start vending right from the morning; and 31% in the evening hours. 45% of them spent 8 hours time in vending; 33% for 5 hours and 22% for 10 hours duration.
- There is a variation of time for visits of number of customers varying from one to more than ten. Seasonal imbalance is faced in selling in the order of Summer > Rainy > Spring > Winter.
- Average earning per month of 59% of the women vendors varies from below Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000. 32% of the women vendors expressed that profit is always derived after selling; 34% stated to be sometimes and for 34% no profit is derived. The amount earned by the women vendors is found to be sufficient to manage household expenses for 23%; sometimes sufficient for 41%; and not sufficient for 36%. 51% of the women vendors possess deposit accounts but the rest 49% do not possess any account.
- Vending work opted is due to economic necessity for 43%; self-sufficiency for 39%; and due to other reasons in case of 18%. Majority (63%) of them feel comfort in this business sometimes; 20% remain very busy; and 16% are able to manage the time comfortably.

Objective 3

- 48.6% of the women vendors' found to face difficulty while transporting and unloading the products and getting proper vehicle every time; 17% of them face sometimes; and 34.3% do not face any difficulty.
- Certain difficulties need to be faced by the respondent women vendors' while purchasing the materials in the order of Price determination (34.8%); Regular supply (30.2%); Transportation (34.5%); and Credit facility (0.5%). With regard to the difficulties faced by the respondent women vendors' while selling include Price determination (23.9%); Bargaining (42.7%); storage (10.5%); quality (7%); Seating place (9.3%); and Communication(6.6%).
- Certain difficulties need to be faced by women vendors' in terms of gender biased treatment in workplace always (1.1%); sometimes (41.4%); and never (57.5%).
- 34.3% of the women vendors' found to face physical problem or weakness in carrying out due to family pressure; 19.3% during inflation; 17.7% because of societal outlook; and 28.6% at the time of sick. 38.4% of the women vendors' come to work though fallen sick; 30.9% sometimes do not come; and 30.7% do not come at all.
- A variety of challenges are encountered by women vendors 'after starting this vending profession in the areas like

personal and environmental mainly in connection with financial status.

Objective 4

- Women vendors' like the profession of vending as they are able to be financially supportive to raise the family status. It is inferred that attitude of the women towards the street vending profession is favorable.

DISCUSSIONS

Socio-Economic Status of Women Vendors

Majority of the women are in favour of nuclear type of family. More than half of the women found to live in thatched type of house. Nearly 72% of them have electricity facilities in their home. 46% of them have tube well facility for water. Half of the women have pucca sanitation facility. 84% of the family members offer support to the women vendors. 44% of the women vendors happened to be the only earner for their families and in 42% of the houses, there are family members who also earn along with the women vendors. During working hours, there is one or other person responsible to look after the houses. 82 % of the women vendors contribute as a decision maker in the family. All the women vendors happen to be a member of one or the other organization and contribute either in the form of attending meetings/offers opinions on essential matters/money.

Business Related Matters

70% of the women vendors were found to be engaged in vending activity for a span of 3-9 years. Initially, 53% of the women vendors accumulated the fund required on their own as capital. Amount invested for starting the business by nearly 73% of the women vendors happens to be below Rs. 5000. 86% of the women vendors procure materials from different types of suppliers. Varieties of items are sold by the women vendors. Women vendors start vending at different times morning; afternoon and in the evening hours with varying percentages. Time spent in vending also varies from 5 to 10 hours a day. Factors such as Cost of materials; Quality; Concessions; Transportation and Credit are taken into account while bargaining the price of materials on sale. Seasonal imbalance is faced in selling in the order of Summer > Rainy > Spring > Winter.

Average earning per month of 59% of the women vendors varies from below Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000. Profit is derived after selling according to 66% of the women vendors but 34% does not. Nature of satisfaction derived from this business is with respect to running the house smoothly and for some saving money for extra expenses. Little more than fifty percent of the women vendors possess deposit accounts.

Vending work opted is mainly due to economic necessity for 43%; self-sufficiency for 39%. Majority (63%) of them feel comfort in this business sometimes.

Women vendors' found to bring goods to the market place either by own self; hires rickshaw; hires van or hire mini auto.

Studies conducted by Malasan (2019); Bhowmik (2001); Nidan (2010); Sharma and Konwar (2014); Rani (2016); Thakur et. al. (2017); Chakrabarty and Koley (2018); Doibale, Mohite, Sawase and Pagadal (2019); Goswami and Begum (2016) highlights the way to empower women in the form of a regular source of income and preferred this as because it is easy to enter with low investment which conforms with the present study.

Difficulties Faced by Women Vendors

Almost 66% of the women vendors' found to face difficulty while transporting and unloading the products and getting a proper vehicle. 69% of the women vendors' feel the need for a helper to unload the materials and managing the shop but the rest do not feel so.

Certain difficulties are faced by the respondent women vendors' while purchasing the materials such as price determination; regular supply; transportation; and credit facility. Difficulties are also faced by the women vendors' while selling in terms of price determination; bargaining; storage; quality; seating place; and communication.

With respect to gender issues the women vendors' usually face problems in relation to equal opportunity or health and safety at work. 69.3% of the women vendors' need to go to work even though sick.

There has been a lot of changes that occurred in terms of facility available according to the 76% of the women vendors'. According to 85% of the women vendors', locality people have fun socializing together on festive occasions. Also, 58% of the women vendors' stated, local authorities are interested in the welfare of businessmen.

CONCLUSIONS

The position occupied by women vendors in the informal sectors is quite significant. They offer goods or services for sale with a temporary static structure occupying a space on the streets. A number of projects or studies were undertaken concerning women vendors' internationally as well as nationally either as business owners or entrepreneurs. There are challenges in this profession but the women vendors' continue to struggle with a hope to witness a brighter side of life.

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